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An Intangible Border: Sulla's *Pomerium* and Destabilization in Republican Rome

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An Intangible Border: Sulla's *Pomerium* and Destabilization in Republican Rome

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Abstract

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In the waning years of the Roman Republic, amidst an atmosphere of distrust and unease, Roman dictator L. Cornelius Sulla enacted a series of proscriptions that infamously left the streets of Rome running with blood, executing those who threatened his plans to re-concentrate power within an elite Roman class. While violence set a certain tone for his dictatorship, Sulla also conveyed his intentions to the public through subtler means, including a program of architectural restorations. This thesis will consider one such act of restoration—the expansion of the *pomerium*, or the boundary that marked a change in military and religious privileges within the city. While attested to by ancient authors, no physical remains of Sulla's *pomerium* have been identified, meaning that the border was likely invisible and therefore largely unknowable to the uninitiated passerby. Over the course of his political career, Sulla would take advantage of the *pomerium*'s sacred and legal import by violating its ordinances on two occasions and subsequently re-establishing its bounds through an expansion of the border, effectively destabilizing the

relationship of the city of Rome and its inhabitants by reasserting his control over space. It is my contention that Sulla capitalized on the boundary's intangible qualities in order to unsettle what had previously been a stable, if benign, concept in the Roman imagination.

This thesis aims to examine how architecture can communicate power in the absence of a physical structure, focusing on how the *pomerium*'s invisibility under Sulla's dictatorship functioned as a malleable political tool for the state to exert control over its population. How the Romans related to the built environment and border spaces is of critical importance to this discussion, as the city and its architecture—visible or otherwise—conveyed important messages about political dynamics. I argue that the *pomerium*'s expansion under Sulla spoke volumes, as Roman spatial memory extended beyond that which was immediately visible to recall the past. As the city streets may have conjured memories of Sullan-spilt blood and its accompanying fear, so too may fragmentary knowledge of the *pomerium* have elicited a similar response, resulting in submission to the state's authority.

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Introduction

In her work on walls and sovereignty, political theorist Wendy Brown evokes the image of the ancient Roman god Janus to discuss the two-sidedness of power in border zones.[1] The paradoxes present within a border—a space marking the transition from one set of rules and expectations to another—are seemingly endless in her estimations: the site produces order through both subordination within, and autonomy without; it is generated and generative; it signals political freedom to some, and absolute power to others. Though Brown's work focuses on modern states, her calling forth of the two-faced Roman god hints at potential applications of border theory to ancient Rome. Indeed, as the god of thresholds, passages, beginnings, and transitions, Janus's existence suggests the readiness of the Romans themselves to recognize the importance of borders and their crossings.

While many borders are highly visible and charged spaces, others are more subdued in their appearances and effects. The *pomerium*, a boundary in Rome that marked a transition in religious, political, and military powers, exemplifies the latter. With no physical structure to halt entry, the boundary was primarily an invisible zone around the city that served as a tool to stipulate the permissibility or forbiddance of certain actions. The *pomerium* specified where the powers of magistrates with *imperium* began, and mandated that commanders, along with their troops, be prohibited from

[1] Wendy Brown, *Walled States, Waning Sovereignty* (Cambridge, MA: Zone Books; Distributed by the MIT Press, 2010) 52–58.

entering the city while armed. The boundary also regulated stipulations for where one could bury their dead, as well as other functions that may have been important only to a select group of augurs and magistrates who were familiar with the rites. While attested to by ancient authors, no physical remains of the *pomerium* have been identified in the Roman Republic (later imperial expansions were demarcated by *cippi*), meaning that the border under the Republic was invisible and therefore largely unknowable to the uninitiated passerby. Only during certain public events would the *pomerium* have garnered considerable attention. The border's most notable function was to serve as the gatekeeper of successful generals returning from campaign, who would have to remain outside of the boundary's limits until the Senate approved their request for a celebratory triumph. The border may have again become visible during the alleged expansions of the boundary lines—a rite reserved only for a select few leaders and rarely exercised under the Republic. Only two expansions in the Republic are mentioned by ancient authors: those of L. Cornelius Sulla and C. Julius Caesar.

The evidence gleaned from ancient sources is fragmentary at best. Preoccupation with defining the *pomerium*'s origin, etymology, and route defines the ancient authors' texts—a trend taken up by more recent scholars attempting to understand this arcane boundary. The exact meaning of crossing the *pomerium* from legal or religious perspectives remained a lesser problem for the ancients. Specific ordinances are therefore thought to have been known by few—namely the elite through the guises of religious and military offices—leading contemporary scholars to conclude that the lack of clarity must be the result of the border's lack of importance to daily life. As the *pomerium* engenders

as much confusion and obscurity for today's scholars as for the ancients, it seems that a better question may be not where and what the *pomerium* was, but why this confusion over space would exist—what would the goal of vagueness be, who would propagate this, and to what extent would this unease be palpable in daily experience?

In this thesis, I propose that the obscurity of the *pomerium* could have created confusion and anxiety for Romans crossing its border, whether simply due to their travels in daily life or more deliberately through set military, religious, and political rituals. Through triumphs, events, and ceremonies undertaken to expand the circuit, the space would have maintained relevance to passersby, rendering the *pomerium* of at least some importance to daily life. The border could therefore be used as a malleable political tool for the state to exert control over its population through opacity and fear, changing in terms of both placement and meaning depending on the goals of those in power.

My study focuses on expansion of the *pomerium* in the Republic, particularly during the dictatorship of Sulla. Over the course of his political career, Sulla would take advantage of the *pomerium*'s sacred and legal import by violating its ordinances on two occasions and subsequently re-establishing its bounds through an expansion of the border, effectively destabilizing the relationship of the city of Rome and its inhabitants by reasserting his control over space. It is my contention that Sulla capitalized on the boundary's intangible qualities in order to unsettle what had previously been a stable, if benign, concept in the Roman imagination. In his redrawing of the *pomerium*, Sulla limited the number of individuals who knew the exact perimeter, establishing a

centralized power structure while destabilizing the relationship of the inhabitants of Rome to their city.

The lack of evidence for consistent and tangible access to both location and regulation of the *pomerium* during this period constitutes the core of my premise. I therefore have not attempted to map or otherwise locate the source, site, or specific mandates in any systematic way. Rather, my considerations focus around how Sulla's manipulation of the *pomerium* enacted a sense of destabilization, and further considers what reasons for and ramifications of his actions may exist. My aim then is not to produce an exhaustive record of the history of the *pomerium* under the Republic, or even necessarily within Sulla's lifetime, but rather to analyze how the dictator's manipulation of the boundary fits within his program of architectural engagements and political agenda.

Chapter 1: Quid sit "*pomerium*"?

While the purpose of this chapter is to provide a better understanding of just what the *pomerium* was and how it operated, the end result demonstrates just how impossible a task such an undertaking is. Several ancient sources provide accounts of the *pomerium* and attempt to clarify the purpose and placement of the boundary to varying degrees, though variations arise in determining who did and did not expand the boundary, and exactly where that line would have been in the first place, with Aulus Gellius and Tacitus locating the original boundary more or less around the Palatine Hill.[2] The ancient texts make attempts to not only determine the origins and placement of the *pomerium*, but also the etymology of the term. Authors debated the origin of the word, questioning if the term refers to residing inside the wall, under it, on both sides of the city wall, or in some fashion related to the city's walls.[3] The mention in the ancient sources of the more concrete aspects of the nebulous *pomerium* are also significant for what they avoid—namely, an exploration of the particular regulations governed by the border. While intramural and extramural activities are mentioned throughout the texts, a catalogue of the *pomerium*'s specific ordinances is missing. This omission is critical to my assessment that the *pomerium* was as vague and covert in antiquity as it is to us today.

A considerable amount of scholarship up to the present day follows similar routes: tracing the line of the boundary and establishing etymology. In both cases, the result

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2 Aulus Gellius, *AN*, 13.14.1–2; Tacitus, *Ann.* 12.24.

3 Varr. *On the Latin Language*, 143; Plut., *Vit. Romulus*, 11; Livy, 1.44

tends to link the *pomerium* to the development of city walls, due to the *pomerium*'s etymological derivation from *murus* and its potential relationship to the *sulcus primigenius*, the first plow or furrow of the city. Such interpretations fail to underscore the singularity of the *pomerium* as an architectural entity and phenomenon, compromising a more robust understanding of the symbolic place of the border. These investigations also tend to focus on what is tangible from the evidence, resulting in a focus on later imperial expansions for which we have physical remains. This approach comes at the expense of considering an invisible potency that the site may have possessed in the Republic, which I will argue is critical in evaluating ancient reception and perception of the *pomerium*.

ESTABLISHMENT, LOCATION, AND EXPANDERS

Several authors write on the purpose and placement of the *pomerium*, with variations in determining who did and did not expand the boundary, and exactly where that line would have been in the first place. Many cite Romulus as the founder of the *pomerium*, linking the boundary to the origins of the city, though where the tradition comes from remains less clear.

Aulus Gellius tells us that the augurs defined the *pomerium as*: "the space within the rural district designated by the augurs along the whole circuit of the city without the walls, marked off by fixed bounds and forming the limit of the city auspices."[4] The augurs were those primarily responsible for the maintenance of the *pomerium*, and the

4 *AN* 13.14.1–2: *Pomerium est locus intra agrum effatum per totius urbis circuitum pone muros regionibus certeis determinatus, qui facit finem urbani auspicii*.

boundary established where urban auspices remained valid. Cicero, an augur himself, noted the importance of the boundary in terminating the validity of urban auspices—once one moved outside of the border, they would have to retake their auspices in order to maintain proper relations with the gods.[5]

Varro confirms the boundary's importance in the taking of auspices, and further indicates that, following the establishment of Rome, such boundaries were created in her colonies in order to establish the creation of a new town. Such a rite developed out of an earlier Etruscan tradition.[6]

As to who established and later expanded the boundary, there seems to be confusion amongst authors. Aulus Gellius believes the circuit was initially defined by Romulus and was later expanded by Servius Tullius and P. Cornelius Sulla, as "whoever had increased the domain of the Roman people by land taken from an enemy had the right to enlarge the pomerium."[7] Tacitus similarly places Romulus as the originator of the *pomerium*. In addition to Sulla, the author also credits pomerial expansions to C. Julius Caesar, the younger C. Julius Caesar (Augustus), and lastly to Claudius.[8] Seneca adds brief commentary and suggests that no one after Sulla extended the *pomerium*, again complicating our understanding of expansion rights.[9]

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5 Cicero, *De Natura Deorum*, 2, 10–12

6 Varro, *On the Latin Language*, 143

7 *AN* 13.14.3: *Habebat autem ius proferendi pomerii qui populum Romanum agro de hostibus capto auxerat.*

8 Tacitus, *Ann,* 12.23

9 Seneca the Younger, *De Brevitae Vitae*, 13: *Sullam ultimum Romanorum protulisse pomerium, quod numquam provinciali, sed Italico agro adquisito proferre moris apud antiquos fuit.* (Sulla was the last of the Romans who extended the pomerium, which in old times it was customary to extend after the acquisition of Italian, but never of provincial, territory.)

From this brief review of some of the main sources contributing to our understanding of the *pomerium*, it seems that already in antiquity the origins and placement of the boundary were lost or at least easily misconstrued. As will be explored later, Sulla may have capitalized on this important and misunderstood boundary to reconfigure its parameters in pursuit of his own needs.

ETYMOLOGY

The ancient texts make attempts to not only determine the meaning and placement of the *pomerium*, but also define the word itself and establish its etymology. Ancient sources debated the origin of the word, questioning if the term refers to residing inside the wall, under it, on both sides of the city wall, or in some fashion related to the city's fortifications. Varro finds the word's origin in the pile of earth raised in the process of the sacred ploughing ceremony, an Etruscan tradition known as the *sulcus primigenius*. This mound, he states, created through the act of tracing a ditch around the perimeter of a new city, will be located behind the wall, which will be constructed within the traced ditch. As a result, this area is behind the wall, or *postmoerium*.[10] Plutarch's explanation of the *pomerium* expands on the ritual of ploughing the boundary, and includes describing the area within the ploughed trench around the Comitium as the "mundus" from which the

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10 Varro, *On the Latin Language*, 143: *Oppida condebant in Latio Etrusco ritu multi, id est iunctis bobus, tauro et vacca interiore, aratro circumagebant sulcum (hoc faciebant religionis causa die auspicato), ut fossa et muro essent muniti. Terram unde exculpserant, fossam vocabant et introrsumiactam murum. Post ea qui fiebat orbis, urbis principium; qui quod erat post murum, postmoerium dictum, eo usque*. (Many founded towns in Latium by the Etruscan ritual; that is, with a team of cattle, a bull and a cow on the inside, they ran a furrow around with a plough (for reasons of religion they did this on an auspicious day), that they might be fortified by a ditch and a wall. The place whence they had ploughed up the earth, they called a fossa 'ditch,' and the earth thrown inside it they called the murus 'wall.' The orbis 'circle' which was made back of this, was the beginning of the urbs 'city'; because the circle was post murum 'back of the wall,' it was called a post-moerium.)

city center is established. Significantly, this trench is separate from a second trench mentioned:

> Then, taking this [first trench] as a centre, they marked out the city in a circle round it. And the founder, having shod a plough with a brazen ploughshare, and having yoked to it a bull and a cow, himself drove a deep furrow round the boundary lines, while those who followed after him had to turn the clods, which the plough threw up, inwards towards the city, and suffer no clod to lie turned outwards. With this line they mark out the course of the wall, and it is called, by contraction, "pomerium," that is "post murum," behind or next the wall.[11]

This explanation seems to follow Varro's understanding of the *pomerium* deriving from the earth moved by the creation of the boundary of the new city wall, again signifying the *pomerium*'s conditional existence on the city wall. Livy dismisses the notion that the etymology of the term can elucidate the *pomerium*'s meaning, but similarly to both Varro and Plutarch claims that the concept of the *pomerium* derives from the Etruscan tradition of land consecration and ploughing before inaugurating a city wall. Livy goes on to claim that the boundary is on both sides of the city wall, not just behind the fortification, and also included the prohibition of building or growing on these tracts of land.[12]

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11 Plutarch, *Vit. Romulus*, 11: καλοῦσι δὲ τὸν βόθρον τοῦτον ᾧ καὶ τὸν ὅλυμπον ὀνόματι μοῦνδον. εἶτα ὥσπερ κύκλον κέντρῳ περιέγραψαν τὴν πόλιν. ὁ δ' οἰκιστὴς ἐμβαλὼν ἀρότρῳ χαλκῆν ὖνιν, ὑποζεύξας δὲ βοῦν ἄρρενα καὶ θήλειαν, αὐτὸς μὲν ἐπάγει περιελαύνων αὔλακα βαθεῖαν τοῖς τέρμασι, τῶν δ' ἑπομένων ἔργον ἐστίν, ἃς ἀνίστησι βώλους τὸ ἄροτρον καταστρέφειν εἴσω, καὶ μηδεμίαν ἔξω περιορᾶν ἐκτρεπομένην. τῇ μὲν οὖν γραμμῇ τὸ τεῖχος ἀφορίζουσι καὶ καλεῖται κατὰ συγκοπὴν πωμήριον, οἷον ὄπισθεν τείχους ἢ μετὰ τεῖχος.

12 Livy, 1.44: *Pomerium, verbi vim solam intuentes, postmoerium interpretantur esse; est autem magis circamoerium, locus quem in condendis urbibus quondam Etrusci, qua murum ducturi erant, certis circa terminis inaugurato consecrabant, ut neque interiore parte aedificia moenibus continuarentur, quae nunc volgo etiam coniungunt, et extrinsecus puri aliquid ab humano cultu pateret soli. Hoc spatium, quod neque habitari neque arari fas erat, non magis quod post murum esset quam quod murus post id, pomerium Romani appellarunt*. (This word is interpreted by those who look only at its etymology as meaning 'the tract behind the wall,' but it signifies rather 'the tract on both sides of the wall,' the space which the Etruscans used

Other writers also add passing references and commentary on the *pomerium* and together weave complicated and conflicting accounts of what the *pomerium* was, where it was, and who had expanded its bounds. The texts generally agree that the boundary was linked to the city wall, at least initially, and demarcated a transitional space wherein certain activities were prohibited.

In secondary scholarship, it seems almost inevitable that each discussion of the *pomerium* turns to the etymology of the word at some point or another, perhaps because the word is one of the few pieces of concrete evidence we have for its existence. If we cannot find an origin point or a satisfactory amount of physical evidence, perhaps an archaeological excavation of the term itself can provide meaning. Etymological interpretation depends on interpreting *pro*, *post*, or even a shortened version of *pos*, in conjunction with *moerium* or *murum* to determine the location of the *pomerium* as somehow before or behind the wall. For most scholars, the notion remains that "*pomerium*" must derive in some way from the terms for wall.[13]

Others though have considered the *pomerium* as an entity deserving attention beyond being part of a greater wall construction. This notion has been advanced by Robert Burn who notes that "the pomoerium was simply a religious boundary, which

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formerly to consecrate with augural ceremonies, when they proposed to erect their wall, establishing definite limits on either side of it, so that they might at the same time keep the walls free on their inward face from contact with buildings, which now, as a rule, are actually joined to them, and on the outside keep a certain area free from human uses. This space, which the gods forbade men to inhabit or to till, was called 'pomerium' by the Romans, quite as much because the wall stood behind it as because it stood behind the wall.)

[13] For syntheses of these arguments see: Antaya, "Etymology of Pomerium," and Roland G Kent, "The Etymological Meaning of Pomerium," *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 44 (1913): 19–24.

since the earliest times had not been necessarily co-extensive with the walls."[14] Furthermore, Saskia Stevens has recently interpreted the term as coming before the wall—temporally as opposed to spatially—indicating that the *pomerium* was the first boundary of the city, which was only later augmented with the construction of the wall.[15] The wall could therefore be guided by the pomerial lines, but was not bound to it, freeing the two boundaries from relating exclusively to one another. Stevens goes on to consider how the *pomerium* could then be considered as predating the ploughing ritual that accompanies the setting of the city wall, the *sulcus primigenius*. In the ceremony, the plough is lifted where city gates will be established in order to allow impure people to cross the wall's sacred boundary at designated locations without compromising the sanctity of the rest of the wall's border.[16] If the *pomerium*'s line was drawn before the *sulcus primigenius*, the *pomerium* would not require such passages, and thus could constitute a continuous circle of religious sanctity without the need to breach the purity of the border or the space within. Perhaps then we can consider the city to radiate out from the nucleus of the pomerial bounds—the *pomerium* establishing a spiritual "soul" to the city around which the walls are built as protection.

Robert Antaya finds an intermediary solution to the question of the *pomerium*'s etymology and meaning:

> Before the free space was obliterated an observer might have noted the wall, the strip of open land and the frequently nearby pomerial *cippi* and not unreasonably

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[14] Robert Burn, *Rome and the Campagna: An Historical and Topographical Description of the Site, Buildings, and Neighbourhood of Ancient Rome*, (Cambridge: Deighton, Bell, 1876) 53.
[15] Saskia Stevens, *City Boundaries and Urban Development in Roman Italy* (Leuven: Peeters, 2017) 79.
[16] Stevens, *City Boundaries*, 25.

> have come to the conclusion that this was the result of intent and not the coincidence, in part, of the sacred and militarily defensible limits of the city. The contradictory *post-* and *pro- murus* etymologies may be the result of such observations at times when the pomerium of Rome changed while the walls did not.[17]

Antaya's approach to the subject of the *pomerium* recognizes that etymology aims to find truth and meaning, even though ancient and contemporary efforts to determine the word's origin have proven difficult, and often frustratingly insufficient. This frustration led Antaya to draw the conclusion that the ancients' preoccupation with etymology derives from the elusiveness of the concept of the *pomerium* even in antiquity: "the problem itself suggests the solution."[18] This conclusion is extrapolated upon in this thesis to consider how the physical evidence, or lack thereof, and the experience of the border also contribute to the *pomerium*'s conscious obfuscation.

CIPPI AND THE IMPERIAL *POMERIUM*

In addition to the ancient texts, there are the physical remnants of nineteen *cippi*, or stones, that include inscriptions attesting to the expansion of the pomerial bounds by several emperors: Claudius in 49 CE, Vespasian and Titus in 75 CE, and finally Hadrian in 121 CE.[19] These *cippi* are conspicuously only found under Imperial rule, while no evidence for any physical marker has been identified with the republican *pomerium*.

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17 Roger Antaya, "The Etymology of Pomerium," *The American Journal of Philology* 101, no. 2 (1980): 189.

18 Antaya, "The Etymology of Pomerium," 185.

19 For a table of identified pomerial *cippi* see also "Appendix I: Pomerium Stones in Rome" in Stevens, *City Boundaries*.

Eight *cippi* from Claudius's expansion have been found and most bear the inscription:

> *Ti. Claudius / Drusi f. Caisar / Aug. Germanicus / pont(ifex) max(imus), trib(unicia) pot(estate) / VIII imp(erator) XVI co(n)s(ul) IIII / censor p(ater) p(atriae) / auctis populi Romani / finibus pomerium / ampliavit terminavitq(ue)*.[20]

Just a quarter of a century later, another expansion by Vespasian and Titus followed the passing of the *lex de imperio Vespasiani* in 69 CE, a law that cites Claudius's previous expansion as a precedent for this new one.[21] The *cippi* discovered from the expansion by Vespasian and Titus bear a similar phrasing:

> *[I]mp(erator) Cae[sar] / Vespasianu[s] / Aug(ustus) pont(ifex) ma[i(imus)] / trib(unicia) pot(estate) VI imp(erator) XI[V] / p(ater) p(atriae) censor / co(n)s(ul) VI desig(natus) VI T(itus) Caesar Aug(ustus) [f(ilius)] / Vespasianus imp(erator) VI / pont(ifex) trib(unicia) pot(estate) IV / censor co(n)*[22]

Finally, the four pomerial markers ascribed to Hadrian are somewhat different in their text, as his involvement in the pomerial line was not classified as an expansion, but rather a "restoration":

> *[Ex s(enatus)] c(onsulto) collegium / augurum auctore / imp(eratore) Caesare divi / Traiani Parthici f(ilio) / divi Nervae nepote / Traiano Hadriano / Aug(usto)*

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20 *CIL* 6.31537a–d; 37022–4; 40853: Tiberius Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus, son of Drusus, pontifex maximus, holding tribunician power for the eighth time, imperator for the sixteenth time, consul for the fourth time, censor, father of the fatherland, enlarged and demarcated the *pomerium* after he had extended the boundaries of the Roman people.

21 P. A. Brunt, "Lex de Imperio Vespasiani," *The Journal of Roman Studies* 67 (1977): 95–116.

22 *CIL* 6.31538a–c; 40854: Imperator Caesar Vespasian Augustus, pontifex maximus, holding tribunician power for the sixth time, imperator for the fourteenth time, father of the fatherland, censor, chosen as consul for the sixth time [and] Titus Caesar Augustus Vespasian, imperator for the sixth time, holding tribunician power for the fourth time, censor, chosen as consul for the fourth time, enlarged and demarcated the *pomerium* after having extended the boundaries of the Roman people.

pont(ifice) max(imo) / trib(unicia) / pot(estate) V co(n)s(ul) III proco(n)s(ul) / terminus pomerii / restituendos curavit[23]

These *cippi* do clearly indicate the presence of the *pomerium*, and mark the site, but the paucity of surviving examples makes it difficult to reconstruct any extensive part of the pomerial circuit. Some *cippi* include numbers that could constitute a numbering system to chart the boundary at regular (or irregular) intervals. As only five of the nineteen were found in situ though, again this line of inquiry becomes difficult to pursue in any meaningful way. While the pomerial *cippi* and a substantial number of textual references to the *pomerium* do provide enough evidence to affirm the site's existence, the exact location (or more accurately, locations) and purposes of the boundary remain unclear through this evidence. In fact, what becomes most clear is precisely this lack of clarity.

I dwell on the imperial *cippi* to suggest a distinction in purpose and recording of the *pomerium* between the Republic and the Empire. Prior to Claudius's expansion, there is no physical evidence to validate the location of any version of the *pomerium*, leaving us only the inconsistent textual accounts for potential pre-Claudius expansions. The inscriptions found on the *cippi* are also significant for their insistence on the existence of the *pomerium* and the role of the emperor in their expansions. Because there are no *cippi* known to have demarcated the republican *pomerium*, even fragments of one, I suggest that the imperial *pomerium* utilized *cippi* as a strategy of power that is distinctly different from the goals of the Republic. This difference lies principally in the goals of the

[23] *CIL* 6.31539a–c; 6.40855: By decree of the Senate the college of soothsayers, by authority of imperator Trajan Hadrian Augustus, son of the divine Caesar Trajan Parthicus, grandson of Nerva, pontifex maximus, holding tribunician power for the fifth time, consul for the third time, proconsul, had the boundary stones of the *pomerium* restored.

pomerium as a divider of power in the Republic. For example, the tribal assembly of the people met exclusively within the pomerial boundary, while the centuriate assembly met exclusively outside of its bounds, maintaining a division between civil and militarily focused assemblies.[24] With the Empire's lack of distinction between the civil and the military though, such a distinction of who operated or controled different areas of the city became obsolete; the emperor could move between such spaces without fear of threatening the religious tenants of the *pomerium*, as he held auspices valid on either side of the line.

Therefore, as the emphasis of scholarship of the *pomerium* lies primarily in the empire and the imperial expansions, I consciously do not consider most conclusions reached about the border's function, not wishing to retroactively apply imperial conceptions of the boundary into the Republic. One key exception to this is considering the visibility of the boundary and its markers; if the border's obscurity existed in the Empire, at a time where pomerial *cippi* certainly existed, such obscurity would have been heightened further in the Republic, if we are to assume that there were no boundary markers.

MAPPING AND VISIBILITY

Despite only a few *cippi* found in situ, scholars have attempted to reconstruct pomerial lines from these stones, mapping the boundary along with their analyses of the

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[24] Mary Beard, John North, and S. R. F. Price, *Religions of Rome* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998) 179.

routes described by the ancient authors. In her review of these chartings, Saskia Stevens notes that all attempts to map the *pomerium* fall short of providing useful information, as they are determined using a variety of sources that do not necessarily match up.[25] Charting the course of the *pomerium* in maps provides us with an aerial view of the situation, looking at the city from above and divorcing it somewhat from a lived experience. An aerial view can be productive, but must be understood as a modern tool of convenience rather than a means of understanding ancient relationships to space. Eugenio La Rocca highlights the importance of recognizing how crowded the cityscape of Rome would be, rarely affording the viewer a panorama scene or long-ranging vantage point that becomes easier with an aerial map.[26] With limited sightlines being the norm, and the questionable visibility of the boundary, it follows that only visualizing the *pomerium* through aerial views would lead to a skewed perception of a Roman's actual experience.

Another important consideration to the *pomerium*'s visibility is Tacitus' account of the boundary. In his writings on the border, he suggests that boundary markers were visible in the Republic:

> . . . but the original foundation, and the character of the pomerium as fixed by Romulus, seem to me a reasonable subject of investigation. From the Forum Boarium, then, where the brazen bull which meets the view is explained by the animal's use in the plough, the furrow to mark out the town was cut so as to take in the great altar of Hercules. From that point**,** *boundary-stones were interspersed at fixed intervals*."[27]

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25 Stevens, *City Boundaries*, 52–56.

26 Eugenio La Rocca, "The Perception of Space in Ancient Rome," in *Paradigm and Progeny: Roman Imperial Architecture and Its Legacy* (Portsmouth, Rhode Island: Journal of Roman Archaeology, 2015): 89–104.

27 Tacitus, *Ann.* 12.24: *sed initium condendi, et quod pomerium Romulus posuerit, noscere haud absurdum reor. Igitur a foro boario, ubi aereum tauri simulacrum aspicimus, quia id genus animalium aratro subditur, sulcus designandi oppidi coeptus, ut magnam Herculis aram amplecteretur; inde certis spatiis interiecti*

Writing under the Empire though, following the first imperial expansion of the boundary under Claudius, Tacitus' account benefits from having witnessed the emperor's expansion and insertion of *cippi*. Access to such material evidence for the *pomerium* leads one to wonder whether the author retroactively inserted these stones into his narrative, projecting a contemporary practice onto the past in order to establish an antecedent to Claudius' actions. The conclusion of Tacitus' remarks on the boundary further support understanding the pomerial *cippi* as an imperial invention: "the limits as now determined by Claudius are both easily identified and recorded in public documents."[28] That the author specified how easy the boundary was to identify and understand under Claudius suggests that this was not always the case—why would such facility be mentioned if not only to differentiate the current process from an older, more difficult system?

Ultimately, even if there were *cippi* in the original founding of the *pomerium*, or throughout any point in the Republic, the extent to which their presence could be made palpable remains uncertain. The relatively few examples that exist today suggest that they would have been spread out along the boundary, even in the Empire. While acknowledging the potential for a physical demarcation to have existed, it is my contention that stones were likely not used in any systematic way in the *pomerium* of the late Republic, and this assumption remains necessary for the remainder of this thesis.

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lapides per ima montis Palatini ad aram Consi, mox curias veteres, tum ad sacellum Larum, inde forum Romanum.

28 Tacitus, *Ann.* 12.24: *Et quos tum Claudius terminos posuerit, facile cognitu et publicis actis perscriptum*

In addition to questions about the *pomerium*'s physical visibility, scholars have also at times dismissed matters of the border as irrelevant to daily life. While the *pomerium*, its location, and its meaning, may have ordinarily been of little matter for the vast majority of Rome's inhabitants, its function as the gatekeeper of successful generals returning from campaign would have been known by all, as generals who had received a triumph for their military successes would have been required to remain outside of the boundary's limits until the Senate approved a day for their victory parade through the city.

CONCLUSION

While the pomerial *cippi* and a substantial number of textual references to the *pomerium* do provide enough evidence to affirm the border's existence, the exact location (or more accurately, locations) and purposes of the boundary remain unclear through this evidence. In fact, what becomes most clear is precisely this lack of clarity. Given such ambiguity or invisibility, even if *cippi*, or some form of boundary marker, were to be present in the republican *pomerium*, it seems likely that none remained present by the time of the earliest author's accounts of the *pomerium*.

As the *pomerium* engenders as much confusion and obscurity for today's scholars as for the ancients, a better question may be not where and what the *pomerium* was, but why this confusion over space would exist—what would the goal of vagueness be, who would propagate this, and to what extent would this unease be palpable in daily experience? I propose that the obscurity of the *pomerium* would under normal, peaceful

times have remained a mostly irrelevant force, as many scholars have argued. However, with expansions of the border in the Republic occurring at moments of heightened tension and violence within the city, the *pomerium*'s imprecise whereabouts may have created confusion and anxiety for Romans crossing its border, whether simply as a necessity of daily life or more deliberately in set military, religious, and political rituals. Furthermore, through triumphs and ceremonies undertaken to expansion the circuit, the space would have maintained relevance to passersby, rendering the *pomerium* of at least some importance to daily life. The border could therefore be used as a malleable political tool for the state to exert control over its population through opacity and fear, changing in terms of both placement and meaning depending on the goals of those in power.

Chapter 2: Crossing the Line

What if the *pomerium* is unknowable, not just because of the lack of concrete data, but because it was intentionally designed that way? Having charted the ambiguity of the *pomerium*'s form and function in the previous chapter, I turn to consider the experience of borders and space within the Roman imagination to better understand how the *pomerium* may have been experienced. Before considering the specific features of the *pomerium* as a border, it is important to establish what relationships a Roman viewer may have to space, especially in terms of the built environment and urban setting. I then consider the function and interaction of city walls with inhabitants, as certain features are common to both the walls and the *pomerium*. Establishing how both borders may hold similar qualities is important to understanding how such spaces are meant to relay expectations to human actors. That is, how the corporeal interaction of a viewer to these border spaces can evoke certain qualities of liminality, purification, and transition.

CONCEPTIONS AND AMBIGUITY OF SPACE

The experience of the *pomerium* is at once a conceptual imagining and a corporeal experience—one crosses over the border physically while also constructing what such transition means for both their individual journey and a collective interpretation.

Christopher Siwicki has suggested that the Roman emphasis on restoration of buildings stems from a greater concern for the conception and function of a particular building's use as opposed to the physicality—and visuality—of the architectural structure. A Roman viewer could then consider multiple iterations of a building as one entity, emphasizing the importance of the place on which the buildings were built as opposed to the material and architectural presence of any one structure.[29] This concept suggests an emphasis on the city's geography and the history of particular areas. If place held such importance for the buildings of Rome, can we map this same idea onto our understanding of their borders? Siwicki's notion of the role of place in the Roman imagination stems in part from David Harvey's interpretation of "heritage" as a cultural construction of space built up by inhabitants through a collection of shared and individual conceptions, perceptions, and histories of a given place.[30] Such a definition of heritage is in many ways caught in the studies of cultural memory, where scholars such as Paul Connerton have suggested that a particular moment for a given society is always constructed in reference to the past, with all previous associations and histories joining in the amalgamation of the present.[31]

Following Siwicki and Harvey's notions of topographical heritage and its human creators, I suggest considering the *pomerium* as a concept distinct from that of any

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29 Christopher Stephen Siwicki, "Architectural Restoration and the Concept of Built Heritage in Imperial Rome" (PhD diss., University of Exeter, 2015) 16–42.

30 David C. Harvey, "Heritage Pasts and Heritage Presents: Temporality, Meaning and the Scope of Heritage Studies," *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 7, no. 4 (January 1, 2001): 319–38.

31 Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember*, Themes in the Social Sciences (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989) 6–40.

physical wall or *cippi* that may (or more likely may not) have demarcated the location of the boundary at a given point in time. It is the earth, or place, then, that holds the border; the boundary's geographical relation to other heritage spaces and topography are the features that give the *pomerium* its essential qualities, rather than any constructed material. The *pomerium* becomes rooted both within the minds of the Romans and within the very soil that they tread upon.[32] Eugene Walter refers to such sites as possessing an "expressive intangibility," as they both express and communicate feelings and knowledge.[33] It is precisely in the intangible qualities of a place that a particular essence, or energy, is created and which contributes to its interpretation by human actors. Such energy effects:

> . . . perceptions and representations on human experience, especially the effect of words, movements, objects, and images on thoughts and feelings. 'Energy' means the capacity to cause changes in interest, feeling or action. . . . Something has energy if it causes changes in experience—if it makes people think, feel, or act, and if it generates representations or stimulates the imagination.[34]

That this space could be charged with an unidentifiable yet potent sense of purpose is critical to my assertion that the *pomerium*'s invisibility did not render the boundary irrelevant, but rather that it could continue to retain a sense of activated presence for those traversing the line. In his work on architecture and state power, social theorist Paul Hirst highlights the importance of space in the service of political control:

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32 Cicero traced the "ruling principle" of trees and plants—an element that holds the world together, possessed of sensation and reason—to its presence in their roots. Perhaps the *pomerium*, as an entity grounded within the earth (possibly even tilled land), contained a similar connotation. (Cicero, *De Natura Decorum*, 2.11)

33 E. V. Walter, *Placeways: A Theory of the Human Environment* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988). 2

34 Walter, *Placeways*, 127.

"spatial, geometrical, and harmonic relations have significance in themselves; they are not merely the rendering of ideas but the presence of real relations of resemblance effective in the mind through experience. Structures therefore provide a means of knowledge through experience."[35] From this sampling of scholars who have grappled with the meaning of place in various contexts, a common theme emerges that highlights the knowledge that a place can carry, knowledge that can be understood by those interacting with a given space both corporeally and cerebrally.

WALLS AND RITES OF PASSAGE

In addition to establishing how ambiguous the conception of the *pomerium* was in antiquity, the etymologies of the term as discussed by ancient authors, as discussed in Chapter 1, also point to how the *pomerium* may have been understood as a border. In comparing the *pomerium* to the wall and their relationship to one another, there is an implicit association between the two types of borders. Some of the associations are made explicit, such as the sacred nature of the boundary and regulations around permissible entry, while others remain implicit, such as the act of transitioning over or through the boundary space. Because of such similarities, walls provide a useful foil for considering many aspects of the *pomerium*'s functionality.

35 Paul Q. Hirst, *Space and Power: Politics, War and Architecture* (Cambridge; Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2005), 164–165.

Walls carry significance in terms of the explicit work they perform and the implicit relationships they communicate. Most obviously, walls protect inhabitants from unwanted and harmful exterior forces by physically halting entry. Limiting passage into the city through monitored gates was a demonstration of power—access to the city was controlled and prescribed accordingly. Ivo van der Graaff has referred to the gates as "formalized filtering points" that were part of the systems for monitoring social and economic actions in checkpoints and toll stations.[36] In addition to these specific, controlled events, the state also used the wall's border to establish a line where laws and regulations could begin to be enforced, demarcating where civilized society began and where untamed hinterland ended.

The desire and functions of the state to secure and exert control over citizens, visitors, and enemies alike also extend into the realm of religion. City walls were designated *res sanctae*, and as sacred things were vested with a spiritual puissance and considered to be under divine protection.[37] From their towering stature, the walls would seem to radiate such protection downward still, cloaking the city's inhabitants in divine care. The wall's sacred qualities may have predated the construction of the edifice itself, originating with the *sulcus primigenius*, the first furrow of a city. After taking religious auspices, the founder of a new city would drive a team of cattle with a bronze plow in a counter-clockwise direction around the perimeter of what would constitute the future

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[36] Ivo Van der Graaff, *The Fortifications of Pompeii and Ancient Italy* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2018) 6.

[37] W. Seston, "Les Murs, Les Portes et Les Tours Des Enceintes Urbaines et Le Problème Des Res Sanctae En Droit Romain," in *Mélanges d'archéologie et d'histoire offerts à André Piganiol*, ed. André Piganiol and Raymond Chevallier (Paris: S. E. V. P. E. N, 1966), 1489–1498.

border of the city, tracing the line of the wall and lifting the plow only to mark where the city's gates would be placed.[38] This was done to allow entry into the city without sullying the sanctity of the rest of the boundary's sacred path. The founder then, in a sense, tilled the soil from which the city's future prosperity would hopefully grow, along with the benefaction and protection of the gods.

In addition, the city's walls affect embodied human experience on an almost subconscious, corporeal plane. Not only does the enceinte determine a range of movements and interactions, but the foundation of the city and its subsequent architectural constructions all originate from an intimate relationship with the body. The proximity of body to building is a concept stressed by Vitruvius's suggestions on the importance of architectural proportions in relation to the human form: "For without symmetry and proportion no temple can have a regular plan; that is, it must have an exact proportion worked out after the fashion of the members of a finely-shaped human body."[39] It follows that if the city and its architecture are meant to at least ideally reflect the human body's natural proportions and state of being, one's experience of such space is connected to their embodied experience. The act of crossing a wall is an intensely corporeal one, forcing one to confront their insignificant stature in relation to a towering structure, the size of which threatens to engulf. Entry is limited through the designated gateways that further announce the grandeur of the transitional space while establishing a force of regulation. As Arnold van Gennep articulated in his influential study of rites of

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38 Saskia Stevens, *City Boundaries,* 13–60.

39 Vitruvius, *De Architectura*, 3.4: *Namque non potest aedis ulla sine symmetria atque proportione rationem habere compositionis, nisi uti ad hominis bene figurati membrorum habuerit exactam rationem.*

passage, the space between either side of the border—the threshold—constitutes a third spatial entity that transforms body and mind upon passage.[40] In the process of transformation, the body is subsumed within the walls, emerging on the other side transformed, anew. There is no way to cross the wall without such complete submission of body and self to the momentarily enveloping structure. This bodily experience also aids in activating the social, political, and religious changes that take place between the two sides of the site. Critically as this relates to building an understanding of the how the *pomerium* may have operated, changes in customs are understood not just at a cerebral level, but also in a corporeal, kinesthetic manner.

Van Gennep defines such territorial passage as having three steps: first, separation from one's previous surroundings; second, the liminal space of the threshold; and third, integration into one's new surroundings. It is in the second step wherein one experiences complete, if temporary, incorporation into the structure of the wall. In addition to this physiological aspect of border passage, van Gennep introduces the idea of liminality in territorial passage: "Whoever passes from one to the other finds himself physically and magico-religiously in a special situation for a certain length of time: he wavers between two worlds."[41]

The wall was a monumental structure in the city, a constant presence requiring interaction with most citizens on a regular basis, and therefore a recognizable urban feature that could communicate many things. If the *pomerium*'s definition in antiquity

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[40] Arnold van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960) 15–25, 192.
[41] Gennep, *Rites of Passage*, 18.

relied at least in part on its association with the wall, it is possible too then that the qualities and experience associated with the crossing of a city wall may be recreated with the crossing of the *pomerium*.

THE *POMERIUM*'S AMBIGUITY AS SOURCE OF CONTROL

City walls provide an obvious sense of place—their structures quite literally define spatial interactions and obscure sight. They can serve as meeting places, reference points for navigation, and a reminder to one's position within or without of the city. Their physical presence is a sign of stability. But in considering the *pomerium,* and its lack of any visual presence, this problem of identifying the actual place of the border becomes difficult: how can we place what we cannot see?

This question addresses a key difference between the city wall and the *pomerium*: there are important transitional elements that are visible when crossing a wall that are absent from the crossing of the *pomerium*. The moment of liminality experienced when crossing over or through the wall may be somewhat unsettling, but one is also aware of the physical delineation of space, where this moment of uncertainty ends and new order is reestablished. As the *pomerium* does not offer such a distinct arrangement to indicate the moments of separation, transition, and integration, there is no structure to contain the liminal moment. Victor Turner notes that liminal phenomena temporarily instate a realm that is somewhat antithetical to the social, political, and cultural norms established outside of the liminal zone. While regulations enacted on either side of the liminal zone

may reflect societies of structure, order, or hierarchy, within the liminal space there is juxtaposed a suspension of these realities.[42] In the absence of defined space, such suspension lingers and creates a sense of an unmoored reality: When has the transition ended? When has passage been completed and a new set of governing principles been instated?

These questions also recall another republican practice that operated in a more or less invisible realm: the Roman calendar. As a system that regulated the lives and livelihoods of the Romans, especially their religious obligations and expectations, the calendar served as a powerful tool. First, the calendar was a system that codified religious obligations. Christopher Fuhrmann points out that the Roman pantheon was filled with gods ready to punish any oath breakers and those who did not adhere to the religious events assigned in the calendar. This would lead to a population that would self-police their practices out of a fear greater than disobeying the state—angering the gods.[43] In this way the calendar, and Roman religious practice more generally, could manage the actions of the people.

The calendar also had served as a poignant reminder of the lack of control any individual had over their life and plans. In the early Republic, knowledge of this calendar was the exclusive right of priests (also conveniently members of the senatorial elite).[44] That this power had been the right of few and a dearly held secret is illuminated in an

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42 Victor W. Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*, Symbol, Myth, and Ritual Series, CP-163 (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1977) 96.

43 Christopher J. Fuhrmann, *Policing the Roman Empire: Soldiers, Administration, and Public Order* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012) 45–88.

44 H. H. Scullard, *Festivals and Ceremonies of the Roman Republic* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981), 43–47.

event much earlier than Sulla's pomerial expansion. In 304 BCE, while serving as a curule aedile, Gnaeus Flavius defied the wishes of the Senate and in a radical action "published the formulae of the civil law, which had been filed away in the secret archives of the pontiffs, and posted up the calendar on white notice-boards about the Forum, that men might know when they could bring an action."[45] Flavius was the son of freedman, and his populist sentiment that the people should know which days were available to take up matters in court were not well received by the Senate, who, in response, refused Flavius's later request to construct a temple to Concordia. This reaction can be seen as an appropriate response by the Senate, in light of what to them had been a divulgence of information that served the ruling class as a form of social control. Prior to Flavius' transgression, lack of access to the calendar would place one in a constant state of limbo over the future, into a state of time that "belonged" to the elite. The calendar contained the actions of the people to certain parameters, prescribed and doled out to the public only as necessary.

The obscurity—and indeed, the lack of physicality—of the pomerial line makes it a fitting candidate to join the calendar as a mechanism of state power. If the Senate could control time through the distribution of the calendar, so too could it control space through use of the city's architectural structures and boundaries. In Foucauldian terms, if we consider the *pomerium* and the calendar as statements within a discursive formation that speaks to any passerby (or over), they could communicate systems of religious

[45] Livy, 9.46: *civile ius, repositum in penetralibus pontificum, evolgavit fastosque circa forum in albo proposuit, ut quando lege agi posset sciretur.*

knowledge controlled not by the people, but by the select group of augurs and magistrates who held the information of the *pomerium*'s exact location and the calendar's mandates. Not being able to completely identify the crossing of the line could bring anxiety to the pedestrian, who, knowing they are nearing a border, is reminded of the systems of power that controlled space, the enunciative modalities of the senatorial class that operate through religious ideologies and customs.[46] This power dynamic is created only to develop division, where those who control systems of knowledge and governmental forces utilize these networks to suppress subordinate classes and force them to conform to a system of oppression. In terms of the *pomerium*, the corporeal means by which such oppression was communicated and reinforced—that is by the crossing of the border—served as a mechanism of control over the body, which Foucault notes "in every society . . . was in the grip of very strict powers, which imposed on it constraints, prohibitions or obligations."[47] Hirst picks up on many of Foucault's themes and states: "power is held to deny, to suppress truth, and to work in darkness and through secrecy."[48] The *pomerium* seems fitting of this definition, utilizing the power of the elite, and the systems they regulate to claim control over both time and space.[49] To understand what we cannot see is have fear and anxiety of that which is unknown, and therefore potentially harmful.

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46 Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (New York: Vintage House, 2010) 88–106.

47 Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage Books, 1995) 136.

48 Hirst, *Space and Power*, 187.

49 One other interesting parallel to note is that the *pomerium* and the calendar (as a tool of the measurement of time) both demonstrate a necessity to construct a historiography of the city, beginning with its foundation and reconstructing events that lead up to the present day. Both phenomena acquire a range of meanings and dates, respectively, in order to situate them within Roman history—facts that can be stretched and condensed to fit a variety of narratives and timelines, as we see especially in regards to the *pomerium* that different texts refer to expansions by certain rulers, but not by others as their political

THE PALPABILITY OF THE *POMERIUM*

Rome was a crowded city that could overwhelm an individual with buildings, streets, and sights that would envelop them anywhere along the pomerial circuit. With such distractions abounding, it is easy to question whether one would have the capacity to sense the transition of the pomerial line amidst the cacophony of daily life. The control over the obscurity of the pomerial line would be a subtler control than that of the calendar, and for obvious reasons. The boundary would not necessarily change anything about normal, daily operations of a passerby, who, when not engaged in ceremonies of auspice taking or burying their dead would most likely not have reason to consider whether they are appropriately acting within the *pomerium*. With the lack of demonstrable prohibitions that the *pomerium* would have signified for the average person, a subtle anxiety could have still existed for anyone nearing the boundary. Even within the excitement and spectacle of the city, I argue that this change would be perceptible because of other signals and cultural cues, along with Roman relationships to space that have been explored above.

Without maps, street signs, or posts signaling directions and locations, navigation in Rome would have required retaining a substantial amount of memory on the placement

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motives dictate. As both the time of the city and its foundational borders and markers are tied to the same moment, the two concepts become almost inextricable from one another. See: D. C. Feeney, *Caesar's Calendar: Ancient Time and the Beginnings of History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007).

and significance of particular landmarks and structures.[50] Diane Favro advances this idea and suggests that the practice of "constructing" Roman memory houses, a rhetorical practice used by orators to recall long speeches, could be applied to the city so that "an entire city could likewise become a content laden object (*imago*) to be read by knowledgeable observers."[51] In a discussion on employing the tactic, Cicero draws the comparison of the history created in the mind with that written on paper: "we shall employ the localities and images respectively as a wax writing tablet and the letters written on it."[52] While the landmarks certainly guide the viewer—both of the city and of the mind—directionally, by virtue of the practice, encounters with structures also call up well-known accounts of the past as well as contemporary connotations of the place within society. Recalling such events would have helped to create a stronger mental map of the city by imbuing place with meaning. The application of this concept to the *pomerium* can be seen in textual accounts that make reference to a building or area falling inside or outside of the boundary: Gellius records that the Aventine hill was excluded from the *pomerium* as it was the home of Remus and a site of inauspicious things,[53] and Dio

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50 Roger Ling, "A Stranger in Town: Finding the Way in an Ancient City," *Greece & Rome* 37, no. 2 (1990): 204–14.

51 Diane G. Favro, *The Urban Image of Augustan Rome* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 7. See also Favro, "Reading the Augustan City," in *Narrative and Event in Ancient Art*, ed. Peter James Holliday, Cambridge Studies in New Art History and Criticism (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 230–234.

52 Cicero, *De Oratore*, 2.86: *atque ut locis pro cera, simulacris pro litteris uteremur*.

53 Gellius, *AN*, 13.14: *Huius rei Messala aliquot causas videri scripsit; sed praeter eas omnis ipse unam probat, quod in eo monte Remus urbis condendae gratia auspicaverit avesque inritas habuerit superatusque in auspicio a Romulo sit: "Idcirco," inquit, "omnes qui pomerium protulerunt montem istum excluserunt, quasi avibus obscenis ominosum.* (Messala wrote that there seemed to be several reasons for this, but above them all he himself approved one, namely, because on that hill Remus took the auspices with regard to founding the city, but found the birds unpropitious and was less successful in his augury than

Cassius, in a discussion of Pompey and Clodius, distinctly, and perhaps irrelevantly, references Pompey's theater as residing outside of the *pomerium* as a descriptor of the place.[54] These references provide context to the historical events and uses of a particular building or area, and as a result reinforce the place in one's memory landscape, imbued with deeper meaning. A walk through Rome becomes a lesson in history.

In addition to the practical uses of mentally mapping the city, the theatricality of Roman public spaces should be addressed. The streets of Rome were prime venues for spectacle and performance that engaged individuals even on simple excursions through the city.[55] This intimacy of experience on the city street served as an effective platform for political messaging. In his typology of formalized Roman ceremonies, including triumphs and oration, aristocratic funerals and public games, Geoffrey Sumi highlights this connection in the Republic and expressly states that "ceremonies in this period often became high public drama further confirming the metaphor of politics as performance."[56] Ceremony is not simply a performance of propaganda though, and Sumi also notes how these political performances were choreographed to communicate power dynamics between elite and non-elite. Though Sumi draws these conclusions from the analysis of

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Romulus. "Therefore," says he, "all those who extended the pomerium excluded that hill, on the ground that it was made ill-omened by inauspicious birds.)

54 Dio Cassius, *Roman History*, 40.50: λθόντος τε αὐτοῦ οὐ πολλῷ ὕστερον ἔξω τε τοῦ πωμηρίου πρὸς τῷ θεάτρῳ αὐτοῦ σὺν φρουρᾷ ἠθροίσθησαν καὶ τὰ τοῦ Κλωδίου ὀστᾶ ἀνελέσθαι ἔγνωσαν, τό τε βουλευτήριον τῷ Φαύστῳ τῷ τοῦ Σύλλου υἱεῖ ἀνοικοδομῆσαι προσέταξαν. (Upon his arrival not long afterward they assembled under guard near his theatre outside the pomerium, and resolved to take up the bones of Clodius, and also assigned the rebuilding of the senate-house to Faustus, the son of Sulla.)

55 For shop signs and graffiti particularly serving as tools of spectacle that force their expression upon the viewer see: Barbara Kellum, "The Spectacle of the Street," *Studies in the History of Art* 56 (1999): 282–99.

56 Geoffrey S. Sumi, *Ceremony and Power: Performing Politics in Rome Between Republic and Empire* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005), 20.

official ceremonial contexts, this same logic easily maps on to the informal spectacle of passing over the *pomerium*. Just as the Roman memory houses or other city wayfinding tactics may be at play in the mind, so too might an expectancy of interaction and performance on the streets bring an awareness of pomerial crossings to the forefront of the mind.

CONCLUSION

Rome's urban landscape carried many connotations of both collective and individual significance. The *pomerium*, more than other more visible and prominent sites, may have held a historically important if customarily benign space within the greater imagination. Its power as a border to control and communicate would have always been latent, as if awaiting activation; its ambiguity of place and purpose would offer further fodder for creating uncertainty and instability. Operating in central areas of the city, the *pomerium* was not a monument to be ignored or encountered by only the few, but underlaid many quotidian activities and would, as a result, be an ideal venue for communicating certain political ideas to a broad public, making certain that all may be affected.

Chapter 3: Sulla's Destabilization

Having established the storied ambiguity of the *pomerium*, and the ways in which borders were interpreted and experienced, I turn now to analyze how Sulla capitalized on these concepts in his engagements with the *pomerium*. The events of the decades preceding the civil war between Gaius Marius and Sulla would have primed inhabitants of the city of Rome to associate myriad locations in the city with unprecedented acts of violence and terror—memories that had been planted within soil and built landscapes, given the aforementioned association of site and historical memory.

SULLA AND THE *POMERIUM*

In 88 BCE, the Roman general Lucius Cornelius Sulla committed an extraordinary act of religious impropriety. A staunch proponent of political values that favored a small group of elite citizens in the face of rising populist protest, Sulla represented one side of a civil war that had so thoroughly divided the Roman Republic that extreme violence seemed to some a necessary solution. After having won the consulship of 88, Sulla and his troops were due to embark on an offensive against Mithridates. Upon leaving the city though, the consul was stripped of his command by Marius' populist opposition within the city. Without official office to continue his campaign, Sulla did the unthinkable, and marched his loyal, remaining troops back into Rome to regain his position. In so doing though, he acted in violation of the *pomerium*'s

mandate forbidding arms troops to enter the city. Violence ensued.[57] In the aftermath, Sulla emerged victorious, reestablishing his political role in the city and regaining the Mithridatic campaign, but it came at a price: he had violated the sacred boundary.

Such a violation would constitute a gross transgression of religious practice, meaning that Sulla's armed entrance into the city alone would have been cause for concern, even if the act had not led to violence. The result was such that while Sulla had subdued his enemies, his actions were not in keeping with acceptable Roman behavior, and resulted in a public image that pegged him a as murderer of political opponents and godless transgressor of the sanctity of Rome's bounds.[58]

This point of view was hardly ameliorated six years later, when he marched on Rome for a *second* time, following another swell in populist support that occurred while he was away from Italy on campaign. This time his breach of the *pomerium* would ultimately yield even more deadly results for his enemies. Upon a swift victory, Sulla was established as dictator of Rome, a role conferred only in times of great need to regain control of the Republic. As dictator, Sulla gained extraordinary powers and used these to execute his political opponents through a series of proscriptions that led to potentially thousands of deaths in Rome, famously leaving the streets running with blood.

If his two unpreceded and highly illegal marches on Rome in 86 and 83 BCE give any indication, it is that Sulla well understood how to harness the capacity of the

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[57] C. F. Konrad, "From the Gracchi to the First Civil War (133–70)," in *A Companion to the Roman Republic*, ed. Nathan Stewart Rosenstein and Robert Morstein-Marx, Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World. Ancient History (Malden, MA; Oxford: Blackwell Pub, 2006), 179.

[58] Alexander Gordon Thein, "Sulla's Public Image and the Politics of Civic Renewal" (PhD, University of Pennsylvania, 2002) 62–114.

pomerium to demonstrate political motive. He recognized what marching an army into the city would illustrate to the Senate and people of Rome: he would stop at nothing to protect the city from perceived tyranny. Another example of his awareness of the *pomerium*'s significance comes after his victory at the Colline Gate where, in a scene of pure terror, Sulla forced the Senate to witness the execution of prisoners outside their meeting place at the Temple of Bellona.[59] Catherine Steel notes that the Temple of Bellona in the Campus Martius was located outside of the *pomerium*—making it an ideal site for Sulla to call a meeting of the Senate in order to stage such a violent act, without further tainting they city's inter-pomerial bounds.[60] In acts such as these it becomes apparent that Sulla's performative, manipulative, and groundbreaking political gestures succeeded in part because of his novel use of space.

POLITICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL INTERVENTIONS

While violence and the element of surprise set certain tones for his dictatorship, Sulla intended far more than mere bloodshed and power. He proceeded to institute

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59 Plutarch, *Vit. Sulla*, 30: ἐκάλει τὴν σύγκλητον εἰς τὸ τῆς Ἐνυοῦς ἱερόν. ἅμα δ᾽ αὐτός τε λέγειν ἐνήρχετο καὶ κατέκοπτον οἱ τεταγμένοι τοὺς ἑξακισχιλίους. 3κραυγῆς δέ, ὡς εἰκός, ἐν χωρίῳ μικρῷ τοσούτων σφαττομένων φερομένης καὶ τῶν συγκλητικῶν ἐκπλαγέντων, ὥσπερ ἐτύγχανε λέγων ἀτρέπτῳ καὶ καθεστηκότι τῷ προσώπῳ προσέχειν ἐκέλευσεν αὐτοὺς τῷ λόγῳ, τὰ δ᾽ ἔξω γινόμενα μὴ πολυπραγμονεῖν· νουθετεῖσθαι γὰρ αὐτοῦ κελεύσαντος ἐνίους τῶν πονηρῶν. (and then the senate was summoned by him to meet in the temple of Bellona,1 and at one and the same moment he himself began to speak in the senate, and those assigned to the task began to cut to pieces the six thousand in the circus. The shrieks of such a multitude, who were being massacred in a narrow space, filled the air, of course, and the senators were dumbfounded; but Sulla, with the calm and unmoved countenance with which he had begun to speak, ordered them to listen to his words and not concern themselves with what was going on outside, for it was only that some criminals were being admonished, by his orders.)

60 Catherine Steel, "Rethinking Sulla: The Case of the Roman Senate," *Classical Quarterly* 64, no. 2 (2014): 661–662.

myriad reforms in order to remove power from the rising threat of populist interests and to resituate power within the class of the senatorial elite. In recent years, this group that had traditionally held most positions of social, political, and religious significance had been forced to share power with populist politicians who had gained influence especially through the role of the tribunate. Sulla's reforms aimed at minimizing this populist presence by reducing the importance of specific political offices. During his dictatorship, Sulla effectively reduced the importance of the tribunate by weakening the powers afforded them and by making all tribunes ineligible for seeking further political office, rendering the position undesirable. At the same time as he hindered the tribunate's authority, he bolstered the power of the Senate by not only filling vacant posts, but also expanding the group from 300 to 600 members. Sulla also instituted a series of changes to senatorial purviews.[61]

In addition to his reforms, Sulla communicated his intentions to the public through architectural programming, or *re*programming. Under his dictatorship Sulla began an extensive renovation of the temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus. In design as well as function this renovation harkened back to the earliest days of the Republic. The four-hundred-year old temple had burned in 83 BCE, just before Sulla's second march back into Rome. It was understood as the first temple of the Republic, and as such carried with it the storied history and traditions of the city, traditions primarily established by the old patrician class. While the reconstruction was left uncompleted by the time of Sulla's death, the new temple was largely intended to replicate the form of the previous structure

[61] Arthur Keaveney, *Sulla, the Last Republican* (London: Croom Helm, 1982) 169–171.

in order to highlight continuity between the earliest days of the republic and the reestablishment of those ideas under Sulla.[62] Indeed, in all of his architectural enterprises, Sulla chose to restore distinctly archaic buildings that would have had a firmly established relationship to the elite past.[63] These architectural restorations bolstered Sulla's political reforms by physically demonstrating the traditional republican ideals that he wished to reinstate in Rome. Among Sulla's architectural interventions was his expansion of the *pomerium*, the sacred boundary that he himself had violated on two occasions. By expanding the *pomerium*, Sulla created a connection to Rome's original founder, and cast himself as a second founder of Rome in response. Similar to his intentions with the restoration of the temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus, I argue that the expansion of the *pomerium* served also as a publicity stunt to further reinforce this political platform.

Though by some he was accused of pursuing kingship, Sulla's expansion of the *pomerium* can be evaluated as a reform measure aimed at resituating power within the Senate, falling somewhere between his political reforms, proscriptions, and other architectural restorations. As a dictator wishing to reaffirm the status of a particular group of elites, Sulla could have seen the reestablishment of the *pomerium* as a way to remind other Romans of just how little control they held in the face of the state power. Having previously utilized the *pomerium* as a tool of political messaging in his marches on

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62 Harriet I. Flower, "Remembering and Forgetting Temple Destruction: The Destruction of the Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus in 83 BCE," in *Antiquity in Antiquity: Jewish and Christian Pasts in the Greco-Roman World*, ed. Gregg Gardner, Texte Und Studien Zum Antiken Judentum; 123 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 74–92.

63 Penelope J. E. Davies, *Architecture and Politics in Republican Rome* (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2017) 183–214.

Rome, the connotations associated with his expansion would have been all the more potent. Given the relative ambiguity of the line's placement, an expansion of the line would have allowed for both an increase in the awareness of the *pomerium*, while paradoxically allowing Sulla to reinvest power within the senatorial elite by gatekeeping the precise knowledge of the boundary—returning to a model where the *pomerium*'s knowledge was a matter only for the chosen few.

While the exact timing of his expansion of the *pomerium* is uncertain, it seems most likely that the expansion took place following his second march on Rome and his assumption of the title of dictator, given the edict that one who had expanded the bounds of the empire may expand the bounds of the *pomerium*. It also makes the most sense that his expansion, or re-establishment, of the pomerial line would occur only after his final transgression of the boundary. The expansion could then establish a new beginning for the Republic, cleansing the city of its impurities and violent past.[64] The effect would have aided Sulla in ameliorating his public image, as his transgressions of the boundary and subsequent violent actions within the city pegged him a as murderer of political opponents and godless transgressor of the sanctity of Rome's bounds. Following in Romulus's footsteps, the dictator's recasting of the *pomerium* would recall the founding of the city, and the boundary's expansion likely included a ceremony with aspects similar to that of the *sulcus primigenius*, as discussed above. Such a ceremony would involve acts of circumambulation, an act that is associated with many Roman rites that involved

64 Perhaps the act also had the added benefit of creating a new political order that would not include Marius as a leader of Rome, creating more distance between Sulla and his rival, who also had marched on the city in response to Sulla.

purification.[65] Furthermore, Aurora Maccari has shown that one feature common to all expansions of the *pomerium* is that the act is completed with a taking of the census and lustration, another ceremony involving circumambulation as a means of purification.[66] This linking of purification, lustration, and contamination of the *pomerium* is also seen in Lucan's later epic account of Julius Caesar's crossing of the Rubicon and the subsequent lustration that occurred as a means of protection, purifying the city in anticipation of the general's march on Rome.[67] Mary Beard, John North, and Simon Price suggest that "this particular occasion may well be a poetic invention, but it remains a vivid reflection of the religious ideology of the imperial period. Rome could never allow another Remus to cross the *pomerium*; at times of threat the boundary had to be purified and strengthened."[68] For Sulla then, establishing an untainted *pomerium* cleansed the city of the bloodshed he was at least in part responsible for, and in so doing, absolved him of his religious impropriety. It furthermore stood as a warning for others to not make such an attempt of transgression themselves.

While establishing a connection to Rome's esteemed past and revamping his public image were certainly intentions of Sulla's pomerial expansion, I posit that there was an additional motive that the dictator wished to exploit—one that demonstrates just how malleable this invisible border was, and how layered Sulla's objectives could be.

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65 Penelope J. E. Davies, "The Politics of Perpetuation: Trajan's Column and the Art of Commemoration," *American Journal of Archaeology* 101, no. 1 (1997): 41–65.

66 Aurora Maccari, "*Habebat ius proferendi pomerii* (Gell., Noctes Atticae, XIII, 14). L'evoluzion dello *ius prolationis* dale origini a Silla," *Studi Classici e Orientali* 62 (2016): 180.

67 Lucan, I.584–604

68 Mary Beard, John North, and S. R. F. Price, *Religions of Rome* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998) 178.

The *pomerium* can be seen as a softening of his violent rise to power, a way to prove that the dictator was murderous only by necessity, but I suggest that there was a more insidious motive beneath the seemingly insignificant border adjustment: having already experimented with how the *pomerium* could work act a tool to surprise and horrify in his marches on the city, the dictator found a way to not only perpetuate the history of his violent power, but also to capitalize on his terror by reconstructing a boundary that would from then on be associated with his rule. The *pomerium* served as an ideal venue to showcase such ambiguous, and contradictory, aims.

INTENTION

> No honorable man, even if he is within his rights, wants to put a citizen to death; he would prefer that it should be remembered that he spared when he could have destroyed than that he destroyed when he could have spared.[69]

Written in the aftermath of the civil war and amidst the proscriptions of L. Cornelius Sulla in 81 BCE, the above quote from Cicero's *Pro Quinctio* suggests a commentary on the dictator's actions. The tone of the allusion though is rather uncertain; had Sulla shown more than enough mercy or was he being condemned for his recent actions?[70] The quote's ambiguity well illustrates the difficulty both ancient authors and modern scholars have in characterizing the tenor and morality of Sulla's life and

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69 Cicero, *Pro Publico* Quincito, 51: *Iugulare civem ne iure quidem quisquam bonus vult, mavult commemorari se, cumposset perdere, pepercisse quam, cum parcere potuerit, perdidisse.*

70 Thein, "Sulla's Public Image and the Politics of Civic Renewal," 63.

dictatorship. Such ambivalence to both his charisma and his horror is more directly referenced by such likes as Sallust: "He was eloquent, clever, and easygoing in his friendships. His mind possessed a depth beyond belief in putting up pretenses . . ."[71] Sulla's ability to deceive with such charm was perhaps first learned through his friendships with actors, but harnessed through his military and political career where he enacted his most theatrical performances.[72] He could captivate an audience and his innovative actions demonstrate a propensity to keep friends and foes alike on their toes. In Harriet Flower's treatment of Sulla's skill in manipulating memory there is again the recollection of the dictator's ability to act in ways that on the surface appear to be diametrically opposed: "He had not only the power to destroy his enemies, whether foreigners or Roman citizens, but also the power to put an end to destruction and to proclaim a new era of peace and stability."[73]

In his biography of Sulla, Arthur Keaveney suggests that several of Sulla's unconventional actions were not premeditated plots but rather reactions to current events; Sulla was not always a mastermind of terror and disruption, but sometimes backed into corners from which an unconventional approach proved his only solution. While the seeds of Sulla's predilection for ingenuity may be seen quite early in his career, it is his first march on Rome in 88 that marks his first truly novel action—his unconventional engagement with the *pomerium*. In Keaveney's estimation, this critical juncture of Sulla's

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71 Sallust, *The War with Jugurtha*, 95.3: *facundus, callidus, et amicitia facilis; ad simulanda negotia altitudoingeni incredibilis*

72 Keaveney, *Sulla, the Last Republican*, 9.

73 Harriet I. Flower, *The Art of Forgetting: Disgrace & Oblivion in Roman Political Culture*, Studies in the History of Greece and Rome (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006) 91–92.

career was not a brilliantly constructed coup, but a last resort. Sulla "had been cornered and driven to desperation."[74] I dwell on this question of Sulla's intentions, as the dictator's state of mind and supposed cruelty by some scholars paints a particular scene of a ruthless individual. Though I do not wish to counter such claims and paint Sulla as a sympathetic figure, I aim to emphasize the ambiguity that runs through both his political actions and accounts to his personal nature. Together, both aspects illustrate a complicated individual with ambitious goals that could vary in how they manifested. That is to say, regardless of his original intent in his first crossing of the *pomerium*, it seems likely that Sulla recognized the impact that his action had on both enemies and civilians alike, and how it surprised and disarmed all except for himself, who held knowledge and sole control of his intentions.

POWER AND DESTABILIZATION

The ingeniousness of the *pomerium*'s invisible power may be best understood in its ability to adapt to the purposes and agendas of a particular individual or interest group. As established above, accounts vary on who had expanded the *pomerium*, but those cited as having done so also have the added distinction of either being a king or an emperor, or aspiring to become a distinctive figure in government. Given the connections to power that I have considered the *pomerium* to possess, this pairing does not come as a coincidence. Rather it seems that each potential expander could have seen the potential

74 Keaveney, *Sulla, the Last Republican,* 62–63.

for political gain through the use of the *pomerium*. Expanding upon Marta Sordi's notion of Sulla's intentions when refounding the border, I argue that he was the first to understand—and capitalize on—the political potential of the *pomerium*.[75] In so doing, he exploited the unique features of the border previously discussed in order not only to accomplish his absolution, but also to perpetuate a sense of unease and tension amongst Rome's inhabitants.

The *pomerium* would have been a particularly apt means of demonstrating Sulla's authority in large part due to its intangible nature in a period of heightened political tensions. In a political climate that had most recently witnessed executions on an unprecedented scale, one has to imagine Rome under Sulla's dictatorship as an atmosphere steeped in fear of this singular regime. In addition to the proscription lists of Sulla's known enemies, people of Rome contributed additional names of friends and foes to the lists, leaving everyone to wonder if they too might be next slated for execution. In such a state, that which cannot be seen likely incited terror and anxiety, as a secret murmur could lead to potential harm. If the *pomerium* could not be known by mere sight, its precise whereabouts were therefore more or less a secret to the public, remaining ever a potential threat.

In her study of the *pomerium*, Sordi has suggested that the entire concept of the *pomerium* and the rites of expansion were refashioned by Sulla himself under his dictatorship, which furthers our understanding of the dictator's motives and perhaps his

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75 Marta Sordi, "*Silla e lo ius pomerii proferendi*," in *Il confine nel mondo classico*, ed. Marta Sordi, Contributi Dell'Istituto Di Storia Antica, v. 13. Scienze storiche; 40 (Milano: Vita e pensiero, 1987), 200–211.

intentions for control.[76] In addition to serving his political allies by reclaiming the *pomerium*'s knowledge as the domain of the elite few, Sulla was also able to create a lasting reminder to his own contributions to the state. As a pomerial expansion could only be undertaken by one who had expanded the territory of Rome by means of conquering an enemy—a post that required the taking of religious auspices—Sulla was able to communicate his particular role in the religious fabric of Rome. The general had been made *imperator* twice, a distinction for Roman generals that carried religious qualities in addition to its political and military significance. Refounding the *pomerium* would have not only reminded the people of these military successes, which were bestowed on him by virtue of the gods' good will, but also reinforced the religious power he carried. The *pomerium*'s expansion would recall Sulla's divinely supported victories over his enemies, standing as testament and warning to those who might consider attempts to displace his authority.

Another means by which Sulla was able to deny Rome's inhabitants any ability to feel a sense of ownership of or relationship to the *pomerium* was through a lack of community involvement in the expansion ceremony. Seth Bernard, in his calculations of the labor force and structures required to develop the Republican city walls of Rome, has noted that a side effect of the production was a communal sense of pride in the work.[77] As so many Romans would have been involved in some aspect of the project, construction became a point of connection and discussion. Furthermore, a sense of

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[76] Sordi, "Silla e Lo Ius Pomerii Proferendi," 207–209.

[77] Seth Bernard, *Building Mid-Republican Rome: Labor, Architecture, and the Urban Economy* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2018) 159–192.

ownership may be established by those who could identify the role they had played in the aggrandizing of their own city. Unlike such a labor production though, the *pomerium*'s lack of physical presence meant that no sense of ownership or familiarity could exist for Rome's inhabitants. The only people involved in the creation process of the pomerial boundary would have been Sulla and those the dictator deemed worthy of such knowledge, such as the elite augurs.

In his conception of deconstruction, Jacques Derrida speaks of the trace, which translator Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak has effectively distilled to refer to "the mark of the absence of a presence, an always-already absent present."[78] As a philosophic system derived in part from his relationship to modern building design, it is not surprising that Derrida understood the metaphorical, architectural scaffolding that his discourse relies on. It is a conceptual deconstruction that he employs in order to assess the unproven theorems underlying a particular system's structure, though the idea finds an obvious parallel in matters of actual architectural compositions. Through deconstruction, an interrogation into the nature of a structure requires an analysis of what it is not—a *not* that is inherently "an always-already absent present" within the object or structure itself. That is to say, the "not" leaves a trace. In relation to the *pomerium*, I posit that in the lack of visibility, the lack of potential for one to obtain knowledge of the site, there is a trace of powerlessness and furthermore of destabilization. Within the greater realm of Roman architectural interventions, I believe a similar idea applies. As architectural historian

78 Jacques Derrida and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *Of Grammatology*, Fortieth Anniversary edition (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2016) xvii.

Mark Wigley states: "Deconstructive discourse is seen to be divided into at least two interrelated and inevitable gestures: one that puts an architecture at risk, destabilizing an institution, and another that consolidates its own movements into some kind of stable architecture."[79] The lexicon of architectural building practice in the early to mid-Republic largely consists of this latter variety of action, resulting in a general sense of balanced consensus and competition to create a stable cohesion in both the city's urban setting and its political system. However, such a system of stability requires a trace of what it is not, namely a system of instability; the sense of stability only becomes remarkable when considered against or confronted with instability. As the fracturing of political stability grew through the second half of the second century so too are the first signs of the underlying instability made present in the architectural programs of generals. It is a trend of gradually escalating transgressions that leads toward the exceptional circumstances of the late Republic, with Sulla's actions—both politically and architecturally—quickening the pace of extraordinary endeavors. Through the introduction of novel practices, including his previously unparalleled proscriptions and the reuse of architectural materials, Sulla put his programs at risk, effectively destabilizing hitherto stable concepts of expected behavior.

79 Mark Wigley, *The Architecture of Deconstruction: Derrida's Haunt* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1993) 53.

CONCLUSION

The installation of fear and the removal of all control—these were the qualities that Sulla wished to imbue the *pomerium* with in order to retain an atmosphere of unease, even after the worst of the violence of his reign had subsided. The expansion of the *pomerium* served as a reminder to the people who had survived the civil war and proscriptions that Rome was not their city as much as it was that of Sulla and the Senate.

If his infiltration of the city with armed forces on two occasions had breached the sanctity that the *pomerium* represented, Sulla's renewal of the border could have demonstrated a restoration of peace and balance for the city. As his invasion of the city broke with the religious rites associated with the *pomerium*, the act of then extending the boundary would also have the added benefit of absolving him of his religious impropriety. While these may have been intended associations with Sulla's pomerial expansion, the border's ambiguity lends itself well to establishing equally ambiguous intentions by its expander.

Conclusion

As I write in the spring of 2019, the importance of analyzing the potential power and effects of a conceptual boundary seems more pressing than ever. With the US-Mexico border but a few hours' drive from Austin, Texas, its presence—or present absence—has remained a constant source of consideration, debate, consternation, and dread. While I do not believe that the value of studying the ancient world lies solely in its applications to contemporary life, the stakes of this project find peculiar and troubling parallels with the United States' current political climate.

This project also begins to consider how architecture—broadly conceived of—and urban topography can convey or enact destabilization in such realms as the political, cultural, and environmental. This may be achieved through myriad methods yet to be explored and considered thoroughly. In regard to Sulla's architectural interventions though, and particularly that of the *pomerium*, I have endeavored to explore how the withholding of architectural knowledge by both visual and institutional means allowed the dictator to remain threateningly illusive.

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